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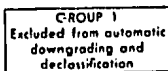
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THE USSR

CONTROVERSY OVER LINK SYSTEM ERUPTS AT MOSCOW MEETING

Bureaucratic resistance to the link system of farming persists despite the high-level endorsement of the reform in the RSFSR last year and the continuing promotional effort on its behalf in the central press. Recent articles in SOVIET RUSSIA and LITERARY GAZETTE reveal that the agricultural conference convened in Moscow on 17 March by the RSFSR Ministry of Agriculture and the All-Russian Scientific Research Institute for the Organization and Payment of Labor in Agriculture was the scene of an open clash between proponents and opponents of the link system.* The sponsors of the conference and their bureaucratic spokesmen were accused of impeding the reform by failing to liberalize official regulations on farm wages which allegedly discriminate against the link system.

Politburo member Voronov again went on record in favor of the link system in his speech to Moscow oblast agricultural workers on 21 March (LENINSKOYE ZNAMYA, 24 March). While noting the expansion of mechanized links in the RSFSR last year--from "a few" to about 4,000--Voronov berated Moscow oblast for having failed to introduce the "progressive" innovation on a wider scale. He not only stressed the beneficial effects of the link system on peasant productivity and peasant attitudes, particularly among youth, but also declared categorically that the old piece-rate system of wages had become a "brake" on the further development of agricultural production.

Articles Expose Bureaucratic Resistance to Link System

A 7 April SOVIET RUSSIA article by correspondents S. Ilarionov and A. Yakovenko provided the first indication of controversy at the 17 March Moscow conference on "Mechanized Links in Kolkhozes and Sovkhozes and the Forms of Wages in Them." The article revealed that a dispute had occurred at the conference over the system of wages used in mechanized links--a system based on the quantity and quality of the harvest rather than on the performance of separate work operations. A.D. Yerkayev, a pioneer in the link movement

* For background, see FBIS SURVEY for 26 March 1970, pp. 13-16.

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from the Kuban Scientific Research Institute for Testing Tractors and Agricultural Machinery, was reported to have disputed the view of A.I. Katorgin, an official of the All-Russian Scientific Research Institute for the Organization and Payment of Labor in Agriculture, that the link system led to wage "leveling." Another link enthusiast, I.L. Kolesnikov, a kolkhoz chairman from Stavropol kray, was said to have criticized the recommendations prepared by the sponsors of the conference on grounds that they would hinder the development of the link system.

In making these disclosures, the authors of the SOVIET RUSSIA article openly displayed their partisanship in favor of the link system. They deplored the cautious approach to the reform shown by the organizers of the conference. They were sharply critical of the "wait-and-see" attitude adopted by a Voronezh oblast agricultural administrator, G.A. Popov, at the conference. And they criticized the State Committee of the USSR Council of Ministers on Questions of Labor and Wages for imposing restrictions on the level of farm wages; in their view, the committee's action was motivated by an unjustified fear of "overpaying" the peasant and plainly discriminated against the link system.

In another account of the agricultural conference that appeared in LITERARY GAZETTE No. 15 for 8 April, Aleksandr Yanov took an equally critical view of the opposition to the link system. Yanov took sharp exception to the views expressed at the conference by I.P. Altayskiy, an official of the All-Union Institute of the Economics of Agriculture and a longtime critic of the link system. In articles published last year, Altayskiy and an associate V. Zhurikov had campaigned unsuccessfully for the designation of brigades as the "basic form" of farm labor organization in the new kolkhoz charter (RURAL LIFE, 21 June 1969); and they had even implied that the Kuban pioneer of the link movement, Vladimir Pervitskiy, had been overpaid for his widely publicized endeavors (ECONOMICS OF AGRICULTURE No. 12, 1969).

Yanov criticized Altayskiy's view that the link system was capable only of "fulfilling certain work processes" and that mechanized links like Pervitskiy's really differed from brigades in name only. He claimed that Altayskiy's position was clearly contradicted by the record of achievement by mechanized links and that it stemmed from a doctrinaire assumption that agricultural labor could only be paid in terms of separate work operations rather than by the end result of production, the harvest.

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Yanov argued that mechanized links had proven their economic superiority over brigades because of the application of an incentive system based on the actual harvest. He maintained, moreover, that from a sociological standpoint the smaller work units under the link system were more effective than the cumbersome brigades in which responsibility was dispersed and the opportunities for internal control limited. Recalling the practical achievements of Pervitskiy, Ivan Khudenko, and other prominent link leaders who had spoken at the conference, Yanov sarcastically declared that Altayskiy's speech had given him a "strange, almost mystical" feeling that these practitioners in the link movement not only had not participated in the conference but did not even exist.

In attacking the "dogmatic stubbornness of some scientific workers," Yanov cited the words of V. Tikhonov, Director of the All-Russian Scientific Research Institute for the Organization and Payment of Labor in Agriculture, at the conference: "It seems to us that at the present time the argument over whether links are producers of products or 'executors of certain work processes' is of no value and hence fruitless." Yanov wondered irritably how much time would pass before Altayskiy and "those in whose name he spoke at the conference" recognized this "indisputable" fact.

Pressure for Link System Continues in Press

In addition to the speech by Voronov mentioned above, which received only limited publicity, support for the link system has continued in the central press. Some articles have focused on the accomplishments of mechanized links on individual farms in the RSFSR (I. Gladkov in SOVIET RUSSIA, 19 March; and I. Mikhaylov in ECONOMIC GAZETTE No. 16, for 13 April). Others have called attention to their successes on a regional level in the RSFSR (V. Ivanenko in SOVIET RUSSIA, 3 April; and N. Korytkov in RURAL LIFE, 16 April).

Pressure for the controversial reform also continued outside the RSFSR. A report on the Kazakh Komsomol congress in KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA on 21 March revealed that the republic ministry of agriculture had been criticized there for inadequate support for the link system. The ministry was criticized by a Komsomol obkom secretary who reported that the obkom had decided to follow Pervitskiy's example after determining that the old piece-rate system of wages was ineffective in stimulating production.

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SHELEST STRENGTHENS POSITION IN UKRAINIAN PARTY

Ukrainian First Secretary Shelest appears to have strengthened his position through a series of Ukrainian personnel shift in early April. A new Central Committee secretary for agriculture has been named, and the Ukrainian cadre chief and the Kiev obkom first secretary have been transferred. These moves are plainly a followup to the sidetracking of Shelest's potential rival, A.P. Lyashko, last July.*

A 1 April Ukrainian Central Committee plenum elected Chernigov oblast first secretary N.M. Borisenko a secretary and candidate member of the Ukrainian Politburo (RADYANSKA UKRAINA, 2 April), succeeding I.K. Lutak, who moved up from agriculture secretary to second secretary last July. Simultaneously, Kiev obkom first secretary F.P. Golovchenko was appointed minister of motor transport (RADYANSKA UKRAINA, 2 April) and removed as obkom first secretary. The head of the Ukrainian Central Committee organizational party work section, V.M. Tsybulko, was transferred to the post of Kiev obkom first secretary (RADYANSKA UKRAINA, 9 April).

While Borisenko's political affiliations are unclear, the two demoted men were closely associated with Lyashko and their transfers are presumably a result of his loss of influence in organizational matters. Golovchenko, as head of the Ukrainian Central Committee machine building section, worked directly under Central Committee industry secretary Lyashko until March 1965, when he became Kiev second secretary. In March 1966, when Lyashko rose to Ukrainian Central Committee second secretary and his proteges were promoted (for example, former Lyashko deputy A.A. Titarenko succeeded Lyashko as Ukrainian Industry secretary), Golovchenko rose to Kiev obkom first secretary. His present transfer to a minor ministerial post is a clear demotion.

In the early 1960's Tsybulko served as Lyashko's assistant in Donetsk (obkom cadre section head under obkom first secretary Lyashko). Tsybulko was made Ukrainian cadre chief in early 1969, again becoming Lyashko's assistant. Tsybulko's promotion may have been too obvious a sign of Lyashko's increasing power, inasmuch as Shelest shortly thereafter maneuvered Lyashko out of his

* For background, see FBIS SURVEY for 3 July 1969, pp. 14-17.

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powerful position as second secretary. The death of Ukrainian President Korotchenko in April 1969 provided a convenient pretext for the move against Lyashko. At a 19 June 1969 Ukrainian Central Committee plenum Shelest criticized cadre work and supervision of Komsomol affairs, Lyashko's fields of responsibility. Lyashko was removed as second secretary and named chairman of the Supreme Soviet Presidium, losing all control over cadre and organizational matters.

While Tsybulko's new post is important and should entitle him to candidate membership in the Ukrainian Central Committee Politburo at the next party congress, he will no longer have responsibility for the key organizational work for the upcoming congress.

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